8364. dd 3.
6

Religion and Learning mutually assistant to each other.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

UNIVERSITY of *OXFORD*,

At St. *MARY*'s,

On *Act-Sunday*, *July* 12. 1761.

BY JOSEPH SIMPSON, D.D.
late Fellow of *Queen*'s College, now Rector of *Weyhill*, *Hants*.

Published at the Request of the Vice-Chancellor, and Heads of Houses.

The Third Edition corrected and improved.

OXFORD,

At the CLARENDON-PRESS, MDCCLXI.

Sold by D. PRINCE at *Oxford*; G. HAWKINS in *Fleet-Street*, *London*; ED. BAKER at *Tunbridge Wells*; B. COLLINS at *Salisbury*, and J. NOYCE at *Andover*.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE REVEREND

DOCTOR BROWNE

Vice-Chancellor of the Univerſity of OXFORD,

AND

To the Reſt of the HEADS of HOUSES.

SIRS,

PARENTS, who take upon themſelves the care and government of their own children at a flexible and tender age, think themſelves almoſt ſingularly happy, if, by their natural authority, they can but preſerve in them an innocent worthleſſneſs in an age ſo faſhionably wicked: what commendations and thanks therefore are juſtly due to YOU, who, by the kind diſcipline of this place of education, and by your well poized conduct and learned inſtructions, not only prevent thouſands of youth, at the moſt obſtinate and giddy time of life, from running into vice and folly; but qualify them for every ſtation and employment, and render them a bleſſing to their parents, an ornament to themſelves and their country? If, indeed, the beſt laws moſt prudently enforced and wiſely executed have failed in this and it's ſiſter univerſity, in ſome few inſtances, of having their much-wiſhed-for effect on ſome naturally vicious or enthuſiaſtic diſpoſitions; parents ought to conſider, that ſuch conſtitutional tempers and paſſions together with ſome faſhionable ways of thinking and acting ſo carefully nurſed up in them at home, and ſupplied, by a maternal fondneſs, with inſtruments of indulging them in theſe learned ſeminaries, cannot, at their time of life, and in ſuch circumſtances, be eaſily confined within any tolerable bounds; much leſs, totally ſubdued and eradicated. It is therefore to be hoped, that thoſe parents, who, forming an unjuſt notion of our univerſities from the miſcon-

miſconduct of a few unworthy members of them, have been inclined to ſend their children ABROAD for education, will now be convinced that the malady, they complained of, was in a great meaſure imaginary; or, at leaſt, leave off the propoſed remedy as inſufficient, ſince ſad experience has demonſtrated to them, that their not hearing of the vices of their children, placed at a diſtance, is no proof of their committing none; as they return home again accompliſhed only with every vice and folly.

Cælum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt. For what can be expected from them in ſuch places, where they are entirely left to the direction and government of all their youthful luſts and paſſions without the leaſt private inſtruction or public reſtraint, if they will not ſubmit to the guidance of YOU, who make uſe of all the rational reſtrictions joined to the kindeſt and moſt learned inſtructions; or be influenced by the ſteady and prudent adminiſtration of HIM, in whom, by reading men as well as books, the true Chriſtian-Scholar and gentleman are happily united; or encouraged by the patronage of that NOBLE PERSON, who, from his intimate acquaintance with letters, embraces every opportunity of promoting Learning, and countenancing learned men?

I am,

26 SE60

SIRS,

Your very much obliged,

humble ſervant,

Queen's College,
July 15. 1761.

JO. SIMPSON.

PROVERBS III. 13.

Happy is the man, that findeth wiſdom; and the man, that getteth underſtanding.

REASON is the juſt prerogative of human nature; and, when cultivated and improved to the beſt advantage by a learned and religious education, the greateſt glory and ornament of it. It ſets a man in the faireſt point of light, adds weight and true luſtre to dignity, and makes the garments of holineſs highly honourable.

FOR when the acquired improvements of knowledge have ripened us into men, and Religion hath beautified and adorned the rational creature; when the Scholar hath enlightened and inſtructed the mind of the Chriſtian, and the Chriſtian again ſanctified the heart of, and finiſhed, the Scholar; then will the Chriſtian-Scholar be enabled to ſupport and maintain any truly honourable and uſeful diſtinction or employment in life with the greateſt advantage to ſociety and reputation to himſelf in this world, and be beſt qualified for the converſation of angels and of GOD himſelf in the next.

BUT if Religion and Learning, inſtead of uniting their friendly aid and aſſiſtance in mu-

tually defending and illuſtrating each other, ſhould ſo far be at enmity between themſelves, as to declare open war; Religion, which is a reaſonable ſervice, would ſoon lie buried under the rubbiſh of monkiſh barbariſm and ſuperſtition, or be greatly disfigured by the madneſs of enthuſiaſm: and Learning on the other hand, which in itſelf is only a reputable amuſement, would be found very defective in many points of uſeful and neceſſary knowledge without an intimate acquaintance with the hiſtory of our holy religion; would wander about, as the old philoſophers did, in the dark and intricate mazes of doubt and error; 'till it ſunk at laſt, as they commonly did, into the very dregs of ſcepticiſm and libertiniſm. So that Religion cannot ſay to Learning, I have no need of you; nor yet Learning to Religion, I have no need of you. Nay, the heathens themſelves were ſo truly ſenſible of the great advantage of their mutual and friendly alliance, that they always appointed the ſame perſons to be both their philoſophers and prieſts; wiſely judging, that thoſe, who were moſt converſant in the one kind of knowledge, were beſt qualified to inſtruct and improve men in the other; that thoſe, who had ſearched deepeſt into the works of nature, would have the trueſt notions of, and the higheſt veneration and zeal for, the divine author of it: and, on the other hand, that thoſe perſons and nations were proportionably more brutiſh and ignorant in moſt reſpects, the more deſtitute they were of true Religion.

And almoſt every period of the hiſtory of chriſtianity ſhews us the neceſſity of this cloſe and ſocial connexion between Religion and Learning: — Religion, as will afterwards appear, being highly indebted to Learning, as well for the defence of her eſtabliſhed honours, as for the preſervation of her original purity: and Religion again, with a grateful return, rendring that Learning more extenſive and uſeful, and the learned more happy; being that wiſdom, which alone can ſanctify all our other ſtudies, and make us truly wiſe, even wiſe unto ſalvation. Happy is the man, that findeth Wiſdom; and the man, that getteth Underſtanding.

It would be unneceſſary in this place to ſpend time in giving you a long critical interpretation on the words of my text; it will be ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe juſt to obſerve by the way, that tho' Wiſdom, Underſtanding and Knowledge ſeem to be uſed in ſome places by the wiſe man in a promiſcuous manner, as ſignifying but one and the ſame thing; and tho' Wiſdom in the original denotes in general all knowledge, human as well as divine; yet I take Wiſdom, in it's ſtricteſt ſenſe, to ſignify, and what Solomon moſt frequently means by it in this book, Religious Virtue, or Religion. And by Underſtanding is meant, that faculty of the mind, regularly improved by a proper education, whereby we diſtinguiſh and know things to be what they really are; and then make a wiſe, proper and diſcreet uſe of that knowledge. — Happy is the man that findeth

[1] Wiſdom, Religious Virtue or Religion, that is, the fear of GOD and the habitual regulation of the heart and affections by that principle; and the man that getteth, or, as it is in the original, [2] ſhall produce, draw out, or utter his Underſtanding, that is, hath the faculty of communicating wiſe and edifying ſentiments; or, in other words, his well improved knowledge and Learning conducted with prudence and diſcretion. — Thus underſtood, this text, and ſeveral others in this book of Proverbs, convey to us a clear and diſtinct meaning free from tautology.

AND the reaſon why Solomon ſeems to connect divine and human Learning ſo cloſely together, and recommend them jointly to our purſuit, is, that, when they unite their friendly beams, they mutually aid, ſtrengthen and beautifully illuſtrate each other; which is the firſt thing, I ſhall endeavour to prove.

AND then, Secondly, ſhew; how and in what manner they conduce to make us happy.

AND, Thirdly, conclude with an inference from what has been ſaid.

IT is remarked by ſome philoſophers, that there is nothing of all the works of nature ſo inconſiderable, ſo remote, or ſo fully known; but what will, by being made to reflect on other things, at once enlighten them, and ſhew itſelf the clearer. This obſervation will hold

1 הכמה Sapientiam vel divinam vel humanam.

2 יפיק תבונה educet ſcientiam, intelligentiam, prudentiam, ſeu intelligentiam prudentialem.

good

good with reſpect to arts and ſciences in general, as [1] Cicero affirms; and with regard to divine and human knowledge in particular, as I ſhall now endeavour to prove.

And, Firſt, with reſpect to Religion, how far it may aſſiſt and improve human Learning; which will beſt appear by conſidering what advantages have already been received from it.

The hiſtory of our holy Religion is ſo interwoven with the profane, and ſeveral other branches of human knowledge; that it is impoſſible to arrive at any degree of excellency and extenſive certainty in the latter, without an intimate acquaintance with the former. And if we turn over the moſt eminent heathen philoſophers, we ſhall find them frequently confeſſing, that their philoſophy was not the reſult of their own rational enquiries and ſpeculations, but a collection of traditions gleaned up in their travels thro' ſeveral countries from the remains of thoſe, who lived nearer the firſt ages of the world, and conſequently nearer the ſcenes of divine revelation. [2] Many beams of true wiſdom ſhine, as ſo many lights in dark places, amidſt their own confuſed and obſcure notions; and we may trace up moſt of their

1 Omnes artes, quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, & quaſi cognatione quâdam inter ſe continentur. Cicero pro Arch. Poetâ, & ferè paſſim.

2 When the primitive fathers of the Church were endeavouring to convince the heathens of the truth of chriſtianity, they very reaſonably judged it might be uſeful to this purpoſe to collect out of the writings of their own philoſophers, ſuch paſſages as contained any of thoſe glimmerings of truth, which appeared in them, which were aſcribed to the remains of Hebrew

important and principal doctrines, together with the great uſe of alphabetical letters, as the only proper channels to convey them to all ſucceeding ages, to the ſame ſacred fountain-head. And if we compare ſome of their works with the holy ſcriptures, we ſhall find it, perhaps, the beſt way of coming at the true meaning of many things in them; and of ſtripping them of all that mixture of fables and ornaments of fancy, in which the ' hea-

brew Learning picked up by them in (1) Ægypt, and which they had greatly corrupted and adulterated by their own vain and contradictory opinions; that from thence they might argue for the greater certainty of that religion, by which thoſe matters were propoſed with greater evidence and perſpicuity. Among the reſt, as Plato had treated of many points unknown to other philoſophers, and had ſometimes expreſſed himſelf almoſt in the (2) very words of ſcripture, in ſo much that ſome of his own (3) followers looked upon him to be but as another Moſes ſpeaking Greek, it muſt be reaſonable to conclude, with the concurrence of all antiquity, that he had either ſeen the Jewiſh books in his travels, or at leaſt had picked up ſome notices of their Religion (4) by converſing with them that had. Dr. Berriman. Trin. Cont. p. 98, 99.

(1) Juſtin Mart. cohort. ad Græc. Cyr. Alex. adv. Lulian. L. 2. p. 47. Cudworth. Int. Syſt. p. 557.

(2) Euſeb. præp. Evang. L. 11. C. 31. Hæc & alia vid. apud Belt. Defenſe des SS. Peres L. 4. C. 24.

(3) Clem. Alex. Strom. L. 1. p. 342. vid. & Euſeb. præp. evang. L. 9. C. 6. Theod. Serm. 2. p. 505.

(4) See this proved by Father Baltus in his Defenſe des SS. Peres L. 4. C. 22, 23. See Bp. Bull Def. fid. Nic. ſect. 1. C. 1. §. 18, 19. & Prim. & Apoſt. trad. C. 5. §. 5. and Dr. Allix' Judgment of the Jewiſh Church C. 23.

1 The wonderful agreement of heathen mythology with the ſcriptures is a convincing argument, that the one is a corruption of the other; and that many of their ſtories came from thence, tho' by the change of names, and other proper inverſions, the firſt compilers of them gave them a different dreſs, to ſuit them to their own meridian. Bochart Canaan.

then

then mythology loved to dreſs and ſet them off. And this will appear more probable and much ſtronger, if we obſerve, as we travel farther from thoſe places, where the light of divine revelation at any time ſhined; that mens notions of truth and knowledge in general gradually grew dimmer and more obſcure, 'till we are ſurrounded with almoſt Ægyptian darkneſs; and even without God in the world. For the truth of this I appeal to the hiſtories of the late diſcoveries of ſeveral parts of the weſtern-world; which ſhew us, that the Learning and manners of the natives bore a very ſenſible proportion to their notions of Religion. That tho' the Mexicans were the moſt civilized of them, with reſpect to government and buildings; and were as ingenious in idolatry, as in ſome mechanical arts; yet all their knowledge both civil and religious was moſtly corrupted oral tradition; that they were ſo far from having the leaſt notion of alphabetical letters, that they were only in poſſeſſion of the firſt rudiments of picture-writing. And tho' the Ægyptians had, or, at leaſt, might have, learned alphabetical letters in David's or Solomon's reign from the mutual commerce and trade carried on, at that time, between the two nations; yet let me here obſerve, as a confirmation of what I only hinted above, that the tedious and laborious workmanſhip of their disjointed hieroglyphics, and ſymbolic monuments, 'till then the ſole means of conveying all their Learning, and which afterwards

wards continued in uſe with ſome other characters, occaſionally added, 'till near 300 years before our SAVIOUR's time; as appears by their repreſentation of the cruel tyrant Ochus by a ſword, and many other things; — the numberleſs, troubleſome [1] marks of the Chineſe to this day; — the [2] Mexican picture-writing I juſt now mentioned; — and the total ignorance of all kinds of writing and reading among the reſt of the Americans, as well as the profound ſilence of all hiſtory, within known time, of any one finding them out of himſelf from the inventive Chineſe, down to the rudeſt Hotentot; — theſe, I ſay, are very ſtrong arguments of man's inability of finding out alphabetical Letters, and [3] of GOD's im-

1 Their marks or literary characters are 60, 80, or 120000, ſays Walton; 54409 according to other writers; and Le Compte ſays, that he is no learned man amongſt them, that does not underſtand 15 or 20000 of their marks.

2 Vide the hiſtories of the conqueſt of Mexico, and of the firſt ſettlements in the weſt Indies and north America.

3 Euſeb. præp. evang. p. 431, 2. Clem. Alex. in Strom. L. 1. Cyril. cont. Jul. L. 7. Winder's hiſtory of knowledge V. 2. paſſim, and others. But what is the moſt convincing proof, there is not the leaſt hint of any hiſtorical inſcription in the ſacred writings before, tho' always after, giving of the law, tho' there were very frequent occaſions of mentioning written agreements and commiſſions, had there been any. Witneſſing pillars and heaps of ſtones were the cuſtomary ways of ratifying or preſerving the memorial of all contracts and other things; or verbal agreements, or ſymbolic Commiſſions, as appears from ſeveral paſſages in Geneſis. — As to the paſſage in Exod. C. 17. 14. tho' Moſes might receive this command to record in writing this firſt military tranſaction, not at the very time of the battle, but ſome time after the event, i.e. when he was inſtructed in the art of writing; yet that very command might be ſet down proleptically, to render the whole narrative concerning the Amalekites more complete.

Winder

parting them firſt to Moſes, and in ſo [1] ſhort, full and comprehenſive a manner, that nothing can be added or taken from them; in order that, when all traditional revelations were obſcured and almoſt loſt in the world for want of them, writing, and, in due time, the invention of printing might preſerve and propagate that invaluable ſyſtem of true Religion and uſeful Learning, with which He was then bleſſing the Iſraelites in a very extraordinary and particular manner; and convey it pure, with it's great completion in the books of the new teſtament, to all nations and future generations.

But farther; ſince the books of Moſes and ſome other parts of the old teſtament were the firſt written laws for many ages at leaſt, and contained not only a noble ſyſtem of divine knowledge; but a beautiful deſcription of the true origin of man and the world, — of the univerſal deluge, by which various phænomena in natural philoſophy can only be explained —

Winder Vol. 2. p. 33. Or as others ſay, that Sepher, rendered Book, ſignifies any record; and what did Moſes do upon this occaſion? We read v. 15. And Moſes built an Altar &c. This was all the writing he was acquainted with. — As to Manetho's account, that his originals or authorities were columns or pillars inſcribed before the flood, it is ridiculous; becauſe the deluge muſt have deſtroyed them, or buried them for ever in the earth. Vide Euſeb. Chronic. Græc. p. 6. Syncell. p. 40.

1 The alphabet for all languages, or that would accomadate to all articulate ſounds, are found in the hebrew decalogue and all the hebrew letters, except Teth. And tho' ſome letters are added to the greek alphabet, ſuch as $\varphi, \chi, \psi, \omega$; yet theſe do not add to language any new ſounds, all the variety of which is as copiouſly expreſſed by the original alphabet of the decalogue, as by any improved ones. Winder Vol. 2. p. 44.

and likewiſe many perfect ſpecimens of ſciences,—ſuch as hiſtory, geography, chronology, poetry, fable-writing and ſo forth,—we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the neighbouring nations, with whom the ſacred people had any intercourſe or connection, were very deſirous of learning to copy after ſuch divine originals: eſpecially, when we conſider, that the Iſraelites, whoſe name GOD had made great in all the Eaſt, by a long ſeries of the moſt aſtoniſhing miracles, muſt excite the curioſity of every inquiſitive and learned perſon of thoſe times, to be acquainted with the genius and hiſtory of this very extraordinary people; whoſe lawgivers, prophets and kings were the greateſt and beſt of men,—whoſe divine precepts breathed as much [1] hoſpitality to ſtrangers, as they themſelves were ambitious of making and gaining [2] proſelytes, in which they were very ſucceſsful; —and whoſe inſpired writings could not but caſt an additional light on the moſt learned enquiries of all travellers; and afford them matter both for wonder and imitation. With which, [3] St. Cyril ſays, even Greece, with all her improved knowledge, was ſo far from having any thing to be compared; that all her riches, whatever ſhe has valuable in her phi-

1 Lev. 19. 33, 34 &c.

2 2 Chro. 17. And Solomon numbered all the ſtrangers that were in the land of Iſrael; and there were found 153600. And in Acts 2 Ch. there were ſtrangers and proſelytes in every nation under heaven.

3 Cyr. cont. Julian. Lib. 7. vid. & Euſeb. præp. Evang. L. 11. C. 28. & Aug. de civit. Dei L. 8. C. 11.

loſophy,

loſophy, were at firſt plundered from the writings of Moſes. Not that I think, as ſome learned men do, that all arts and ſciences are contained in the old teſtament; or, that man had no inventive faculties given him to make very conſiderable improvements on, and additions to, thoſe communications, which GOD at ſundry times and in divers manners made to Adam and many of his poſterity for the comforts and ornaments as well as the neceſſaries of human life: But this I may ſafely affirm, that if the Ægyptians, or any other nation had tranſmitted down to poſterity a hiſtory, in which was contained ſuch a variety of Learning, they might then have been very juſtly commended for what their great admirers, who pretend to ſee farther into that far diſtant terra incognita than other men, can at this diſtance of time only ſuppoſe, they were acquainted with; — who almoſt adore them, as the Athenians did their unknown GOD, for their unknown Learning. For notwitſtanding the many excellent things that have been ſpoken of the antient Ægyptian arts and ſciences in general, which all muſt allow were conſiderable, from what the ſcriptures juſt mention, for thoſe very early times and in compariſon with moſt of their neighbours, eſpecially their ſkill in [1] architecture, politicks and

1 Conſidering that all their buildings were of the gigantic, but not delicate and correct taſte, and the vaſt multitudes that were employed about them, one would ſuſpect, that that art was then only in it's infancy, and inſtruments of expedition were much wanted. There were 100,000 men employed as

laws, which ſome writers very highly commend, and which, give me leave to offer a very probable conjecture, might be owing in ſome meaſure to Joſeph's heavenly-inſtructed adminiſtration of affairs; yet we know for certain, that all their natural philoſophy, of which they chiefly boaſted, could only be conjectural, without the help of teleſcopes, experiments and other requiſites, but eſpecially mathematicks, in which they had made, if we may believe [1] Thales and Pythagoras, no conſiderable progreſs, when they were in Ægypt. They had, indeed, the grounds and elements of moſt parts of real Learning; [2] but the hereditary reſtrictions of arts and ſciences to certain families; — the ſeparation of each parti-

Herodotus ſays, L. 2. C. 124, 127. and, according to Diodorus, 360,000, L. 1. C. 5. and 366,000, as Pliny affirms, for 20 years in building the greateſt Pyramid.

1 The one, by his invention of the forty ſeventh proproſition of the firſt book of Euclid; the other, by his finding out how to inſcribe a rectangled triangle within a circle after their return from Ægypt, ſhew, that neither aſtronomy, nor natural philoſophy, nor any other art or ſcience, which depended on mathematicks, was as yet carried to any great perfection there. Laert. in vit. Thalet.

2 As theſe reſtrictions nipped in the bud all emulation of excelling in the ſtudy of arts and ſciences, Plato de Leg. C. 2. p. 789; ſo an application to one particular branch of them, excluſive of the reſt, proved very defective and prejudicial, eſpecially in the ſtudy of phyſic; where a fundamental and univerſal knowledge of the whole animal economy and of the force of the materia medica upon it, is abſolutely neceſſary for the cure of many complicated caſes. Beſides, the Ægyptian practice of phyſic depended ſo much on aſtrological and magical grounds, either on the influence of ſome particular planet, or ſome tutelar dæmon (and therefore their oracles were conſulted) that it ſtopped any increaſe of knowledge which might be made on other principles. Wotton p. 119.

cular

cular branch of them, to which the learned were confined, excluſive of the reſt;—together with the very early riſe and quick increaſe of ſuperſtition, were the well-known great impediments in their growth to perfection. Beſides all this, their Learning could not poſſibly be either very certain or extenſive, ſince it all depended upon oral tradition; or, was only repreſented and preſerved by hieroglyphical characters 'till the times of David or Solomon, as I before hinted, and [1] Sir Iſaac Newton in his long well-weighed chronology proves; which could be of no great ſervice to record intelligibly and diſtinctly any ſeries of facts of their own and paſt ages, but by being connected with traditional reports; which end is defeated by the changes and unavoidable uncertainties to which the latter in time are ſubject. And a very convincing proof of this, is, that if the Ægyptian prieſts had had any authentic written records of ancient times, when Herodotus or Diodorus Siculus were in Ægypt, [2] for they confeſs they ſaw none, they would neither have pleaded ignorance of the hiſtory of their pyramids, nor fabled ſuch ridiculous ſtories of their own and country's incre-

1 Page 210. This Work was the product of a laborious and general ſearch into antiquity for near 30 years.

2 The manner, that the prieſts took to prove the number and reigns of their kings, was, by a correſpondent number of wooden Coloſſi or ſtatues of the high prieſts, which were ſhewn to Herodotus and all travellers in a grand apartment, to explain the antiquity and hiſtory of their country by. Herod. Euterp. Cap. 142, 143. Diodor. Sic. Lib. 1. Cap. 1, Joſeph. contra Apion.

dible

dible antiquity, nor have varied ſo much in their reports about the reigns of ſome of their kings, as to make them differ from [1] Manetho 6000 years, and from each other 1000, tho' their calculations begin about the ſame period of time. — It is very improbable to ſuppoſe, that Cambyſes, who was more an enemy to the groſs idolatry of the Ægyptians, than to their Learning, ſhould burn or carry away every record they had: but if he had, as ſome pretend to imagine; yet the very memory of the prieſts, who were their hiſtorians, and who were daily converſant in the hiſtoric monuments of all their material paſt tranſactions, would, at leaſt, have preſerved and delivered down a much better account 'till Herodotus's time, than we find they were then able to do. For all their own memoirs before their country was reduced by Alexander the great, which we find diſperſed in Greek and Roman hiſtories, are a poor, incoherent collection of tales unworthy the genius of an hiſtoric and learned nation. — From all which we may learn to ſet a juſt value on the divine books of the old teſtament; without which we ſhould be ignorant of many very material things; and be left to feel out our way in the dark through blind traditions and obſcure hints of much later, ignorant writers. For we cannot but ſee, how miſerable a figure ancient hiſtory would make before Herodotus's time; and in what a laby-

1 Vide Dodwell Sanchon. p. 113, 114. Cumberland Sanchon. p. 311.

rinth

rinth of uncertainties and errors we ſhould wander, did we let go the clue of ſcriptural [1] chronology; ſince all heathen hiſtorians were neceſſitated to borrow ſome events from the Jewiſh accounts in order to give ſome air of probability to the abſurdities they had to relate.

And if we come down to the period, or time of the goſpel diſpenſation, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that our bleſſed Saviour choſe to make his appearance in the world, when human reaſon and Learning diſplayed their powers to the greateſt advantage, that meer heathen eloquence could aſpire to; not only to invite the inquiſitive eye to behold the beauty and purity of the goſpel-precepts; to ſearch and ſee whether theſe things were ſo; but likewiſe to give countenance to an age of good letters and Learning; to help the ſtudious in their reſearches after knowledge; and to lead them into all truth. I do not here mean, as I ſaid before, that all arts and ſciences are contained in the ſcriptures; but it is the peculiar excellency of true religion to enlighten our underſtandings and enlarge our ideas; — to give us right notions of the being and nature of God; — to acquaint us with the true origin of the world and of ourſelves; — to aſſure us of the immateriality and im-

1 We may learn from the Arundelian marbles at Oxford, that all heathen chronology, on which the perfection of hiſtory depends, was only in it's infancy about 260 years before our Saviour's time.

mortality

mortality of the ſoul; — to convince us of a divine Providence over the natural as well as over the moral world; into which, perhaps, true philoſophy will at laſt ſolve all [1] gravitation and attraction; — to inform us of the nature and reaſon of things and of ſeveral neceſſary ſpeculative truths, from whence the moſt perfect and beſt ſyſtem of metaphyſicks has been compiled that ever was advanced; — to promote true knowledge in general, not only by expelling abſurd fictions and the miſts of ignorance and ſuperſtition, but by bringing a kind of day and ſunſhine upon the neighbouring branches of uſeful Learning; — and, laſtly, to improve the bleſſings of polite and civilized life, by the graces that accompany it. Accordingly we find, that the old ſects of philoſophers gradually decreaſed in proportion as chriſtianity gained ground; and that every chriſtian by the knowledge and excellency of it's doctrines became a philoſopher. [2] Juſtin, the martyr, who was himſelf a philoſopher, preferred the chriſtian Religion, becauſe it appeared to him to be the true philoſophy: and Clemens, the Roman, after he had had recourſe, but in vain, to the heathen philoſophers and Ægyptian prieſts for the knowledge

1 Newton's Opticks page 343.

2 Vide for theſe inſtances of Juſtin, Clemens and Julian their lives and works paſſim. Some, indeed, of the primitive fathers retained ſome tincture of the heathen philoſophical notions, in which they were educated, and a few commonly received opinions, where they were bred; but all of them were greatly enlighten'd in the knowledge of philoſophy, as well as morality, by the ſcriptures.

of

of many things, was indebted, at laſt, to the chriſtian Religion for his information; and was not only converted himſelf, but brought over ſome of the beſt families of Rome to the chriſtian faith. Nay, Julian, the apoſtate, ordered that the Roman philoſophy ſhould be reformed and refined by the chriſtian; from whence their philoſophy became more religious, and their Religion more philoſophical. And we cannot imagine, that the underſtandings of chriſtians now-a-days are better than thoſe of all the wiſe men of antiquity; [1] but that we can argue better, and have more diſtinct and clearer notions of truth in general, is owing to the light of revelation. And hiſ-

1 Tho' the ſcriptures do not inſtruct us merely to gratify our curioſity; tho' they ſeldom ſay any thing to inform the head, but in order to mend the heart, nor make us wiſer and more knowing, but with a deſign of making us better; yet as the hiſtory of our Religion contains the whole ſcheme, order and ſtate of things, beginning from eternity, with the creation of the world and the formation of man, and ending in eternity with the laſt judgment and the conſummation of all things, it cannot but ſtrengthen and extend the imagination, improve and refine the reaſoning faculty and afford the nobleſt topicks of invention, and greatly aſſiſt our acquaintance with ſome other branches of knowledge, either by way of explication, illuſtration or proof, which have any neighbourly or conſequential connection, as many of them have, with it's ſpeculative and hiſtorical truths. — Thus theology, conſidered as a ſcience, a perfect ſyſtem of which is contained in the ſcriptures, teaches chriſtians to argue better than any of the heathens could poſſibly do, and to have clearer notions of many ſpeculative as well as moral truths; as will very fully appear from a juſt compariſon made between their writings. I muſt, therefore, beg leave to diſſent from thoſe, who think that the primitive fathers' Learning was limited and imperfect; ſince they had been ſome of the moſt learned heathen philoſophers; and, by the additional ſtudy of the ſcriptures, were able to expoſe the

tory and our own obſervations may convince us, that not only the happineſs and proſperity, but the Learning and real good manners of a people keep equal pace with the purity of the Religion they profeſs. We need not compare the enlighten'd chriſtian with the unletter'd heathen, nor the proteſtant with the papiſt for the truth of this; ſince the ſeveral popiſh communities themſelves, according as the inhabitants are more or leſs blinded by the abſurdities and ſuperſtitions of their Religion, are a full confirmation of it. — Thus far pure Religion tends to aid and advance knowledge human as well as divine; — to inform and refine mankind in morals and manners; and, whilſt it gives the promiſes of the next life, improves and adorns the preſent. — Happy is the man that findeth wiſdom.

LET us now ſee, on the other hand, how far human Learning aids, ſtrengthens and il-

errors and perplexities of their adverſaries in the theories of (1) nature, as well as in queſtions of morality; tho' moſt of their time was employed in proving the reaſonableneſs, excellency and truth of our Religion, and in propagating it's divine doctrines. Moſt of the Monks, indeed, contented themſelves with the devotional parts of chriſtianity; and, from an ignorance of it's ſpeculative truths, or want of a laudable application of them to knowledge in general, together with a neglect of human Learning, degenerated into a blind ſuperſtition; and this is the caſe more or leſs, at preſent, of all the popiſh communities.

(1) Vid. Hermiæ philoſoph. Gentil. irriſio ad cal. Juſtin. Martyr. Origen paſſim. Lactant. L. 3. C. 2—7. Euſeb. præp. evang. L. 15. C. 1. 31, 61. Theod. Serm. 4. de materiâ & mundo inter opera tom. 4. p. 527 &c.

luſtrates

luſtrates Religion. — Happy is the man, that getteth underſtanding.

I ſhall ſay nothing of the Jewiſh Learning, or of the ſons and ſchools of their prophets; becauſe it is not an eaſy matter to prove, that they ſtudied any thing elſe in them, than to read, tranſcribe, and interpret their own law; and to compoſe and rehearſe divine hymns to muſick. — It muſt likewiſe be obſerved of chriſtianity, that it had not it's foundation laid in proud ſcience or human Learning. The power of GOD, as well as the wiſdom of GOD, were remarkably viſible in the firſt eſtabliſhment of it. Divine inſpiration and miracles more than ſupplied the want of all human erudition. For the divine treaſure was committed to earthen veſſels, men unlettered and ignorant; leſt we ſhould imagine, as Origen againſt Celſus ſays, "that it was not truth itſelf that conquered men, but that the firſt converts to chriſtianity had been over-reached by the ſpecious and fallacious conſequences of deſigning men; or by the Learning of the ſcholar." — But as ſoon as ſigns and wonders, thoſe neceſſary and immediate interpoſitions of divine providence, ceaſed; revelation received it's ſtrongeſt aid and ſupport from human ſcience; and from thoſe eminent perſons, whoſe names have adorned and cultivated letters. Human Learning was to them, not only what the ſtar in the eaſt was to the wiſe men, a ſure guide to bring them to CHRIST; but it likewiſe enabled them to give a reaſon

of the hope that was in them; to defend and propagate the chriſtian faith againſt all oppoſition. And, indeed, a man muſt be as ignorant of the hiſtory of our holy Religion, as he is of the world, to think, that what was at firſt a ſtumbling block to the Jews and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs, tho' ſupported by prophecies out of their own law to convince the former, and eſtabliſhed by miracles to ſilence the latter, could have alone, without any friendly aid and alliance, ſo ſucceſsfully defeated the conſtant attacks of the declared infidel for ſo many ages, and guarded againſt the dangerous treachery of the perſonated Jew, the chriſtian deiſt, and the maſked enthuſiaſt, whoſe chriſtianity is not founded on argument. For tho' our Religion depends not on the talents and wiſdom of men for it's being; nor owes it's authority to the ſucceſs of thoſe, who have appeared in it's defence; ſince GOD has declared, and he cannot lie, that the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt it: yet becauſe the greateſt part of CHRIST's church have always been and ſtill are unſtable and unlearned, who are toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs whereby they lie in wait to deceive; it has always been thought prudent and neceſſary for the watchmen of our holy Religion to put on the whole armour of GOD, and, being ſupported with the aſſiſtance of all human Learning, to repell the enemy, to repair the breaches that

are

are made, and ſo ſecure the foundations of Religion; and, like Nehemiah and his men, to work in the buildings of our holy Jeruſalem with one hand, and to hold a weapon of defence with the other.—St. Paul, that great maſter of reaſoning, even in the times of divine inſpiration, argued with his own countrymen the Jews from their own topicks of learning; and with the Gentiles out of their own poets: and eſtabliſhed the great principles of chriſtianity againſt the ſubtilties of the heathens by the ſame ways of reaſoning, which were then in uſe amongſt their moſt eminent philoſophers. And for the honour of our faith be it ſpoken, that the purity of it's precepts and the brightneſs of it's doctrines always ſhined forth the ſtrongeſt and cleareſt, and had the happieſt influence on men's lives, when human Learning kept in it's zenith; and when the moſt eminent converted maſters of rhetorick and philoſophy, through ſucceſſive ages, were it's greateſt ornaments, as well as ableſt defenders: who having truth, a good conſcience and GOD himſelf on their ſide, and being perfectly acquainted with their adverſaries' weapons and armour in which they put their whole truſt and confidence, always gained very eaſy victories over their ſtrongeſt enemies, and put to flight the armies of the aliens.—"If your ſcriptures," ſays Julian, "have ſuch power of improving you in wiſdom; if, as [1] Euſebius boaſts, you find in them the prin-

1 Euſeb. præp. evang. L. 11. C. 5, 6.

ciples

ciples of univerſal knowledge, how comes it to paſs, that you are ſo well verſed in the writings and philoſophy of the Greeks?" "We read your books," replied [1] St. Cyril, "becauſe we would be better able to confute your errors and deſtroy your ſuperſtition; becauſe from a knowledge of your fables and philoſophy we are more capable of making the unequal compariſon between our ſcriptures and them; and conſequently of ſetting a juſt value upon the truths of GOD." And ſome of the primitive fathers affirm, that the oppoſition they met with from the heathen writers made it neceſſary to have ſchools erected for the ſtudy of philoſophy, as thoſe of [2] Ammonius, Anatolius and others; or, at leaſt, to ſelect ſome of their diſciples for that ſort of education as [3] Euſebius relates of Origen, that ſo they might diſpute with theſe philoſophers upon their own principles, and make their philoſophy as much ſubſervient to the cauſe of chriſtianity, as the various arts and ſciences of human Learning are to [4] philoſophy itſelf. It was upon this account, that Julian by a cruel edict, as his laſt effort and the moſt effectual method of deſtroying chriſtianity, prohibited the uſe of all [5] ſchools and ſeminaries of human Learning among the chriſtians; and the reaſon, he

1 Cyr. cont. Julian. L. 7.
2 Porphyr. in Euſeb. L. 6. C. 19. & L. 7. C. 32. H. E.
3 Euſeb. L. 6. C. 18.
4 Clem. Alex. Strom. L. 1. p. 284 & p. 291. Origen in Philocal. C. 13.
5 Theod. H. E. L. 3. C. 8.

gives

gives for it, is this; "for otherwiſe," ſays he, "theſe Galileans will turn our own arms upon ourſelves, and beat us at our own weapons." From whence we may learn, that neither the purity of our holy Religion could ever have been corrupted, nor the brightneſs of it's doctrines eclipſed at any time, had not human Learning been at the ſame period either obſcured or neglected; nay, had not the inundations of the Scythians from the north, and the Saracens from the eaſt ſwept away even the very memory of letters: and then, indeed, all was darkneſs, ſuperſtition and error. — The firſt effort of emerging out of this deplorable, ignorant ſtate, and of reviving true chriſtianity, which lay buried under the ruins of human Learning, was made by the ſchoolmen by the help of the Peripatetic philoſophy. They joined reaſoning to matters of fact; a conjunction without which there is no clear conviction: they ſhewed the ſubject in a better light by the ſolution of difficulties, which themſelves had raiſed: they ſet bounds to the looſeneſs of expreſſion, and introduced method, by which means they eaſed the mind, that in nice abſtracted ſubjects labours much, and is apt to be diſcouraged and flag.

THUS far Religion was indebted to [1] ſchool-divinity for her friendly aid and aſſiſtance: and

1 I would recommend to thoſe, who eſteem it a more valuable talent to rally and jeſt upon ſchool-divinity, than to read and underſtand it, what Mr. Baker ſays in his reflections on Learning page 274. "Thomas Aquinas, ſays he, has improved natural reaſon to an uncommon height, and many of thoſe

ever ſince the greateſt men have made it, by refining it, the ſtrongeſt barrier againſt all error. But when that knowledge of letters was farther revived in the weſt by the help of the exiled Greeks, who were greatly indebted to the clergy for their protection and encouragement, and when the ſchools of the prophets were much increaſed in this and it's ſiſter univerſity; and human Learning had highly improved the ſons of the prophets; then the reformation began gradually to dawn: pure Religion again lifted up her head, ſhook off the rubbiſh of monkiſh barbariſm and ſuperſtition, and appeared in her own primitive, lovely form. So far was the reſurrection of letters from being [1] fatal to, that it was the moſt happy period of, the chriſtian Religion. And hiſtory ſhews us, that divine and human wiſdom have ever ſince gone hand in hand, mutually ſupporting, ſtrengthening and illuſtrating each other, tho' they have equally ſuffered ſince, in ſome particular inſtances, from having their

thoſe proofs of a God and Providence and natural Religion, that have been advanced of late, as new arguments, with ſo much applauſe, have been borrowed from him, and other ſchoolmen; and are only not his, by being put in a new dreſs and ſometimes in a worſe method." A good uſe may be made of the ſchoolmen, ſays Dr. Berriman, if read with candor and judgment, and a ſincere purpoſe of adhering to truth. He was afraid, they afforded objections to infidels; but they fully anſwer them again.

1 The reſurrection of letters was a fatal period &c. And again, chriſtianity has been in decay ever ſince the reſurrection of letters. Lord Bolingbroke on the ſtudy and uſe of hiſtory. Vol. 1. page 182. and 185. Oct. Edit.

perfect

perfect work, by a diſſipation of thought, by the enthuſiaſm, folly and wickedneſs of men.

But to deſcend to particulars, and ſhew a few inſtances among many; wherein revelation can neither be rightly underſtood, nor properly defended, without the aid and aſſiſtance of improved reaſon and human Learning.

So long as there are men who call in queſtion the truth as well as the reaſonableneſs of our holy Religion; who aſſert, that God could not give a revelation; that He cannot ſhew more favours, i. e. grant more bleſſings to ſome than to others, nor vary his diſpenſations, i. e. accommodate them to the varying circumſtances of his creatures; ſo long will metaphyſicks and abſtract reaſon be neceſſary to anſwer theſe objections by confirming and illuſtrating the particular and various diſpenſations of providence by analogy, — by a view of the courſe of nature, — by obſervations on unqueſtionable facts. For tho' we could not have foretold, had we not been informed, how God would have governed the world; yet when revelation opens more inſtances ſimilar to what is done by ordinary providences, it receives from thence an additional credibility.

Again; an intimate acquaintance with the hiſtories, laws, cuſtoms, common alluſions and popular notions of thoſe early and diſtant times and nations, which were the immediate ſcenes of divine revelation, and with whom the ſacred people had any intercourſe and connection, will be found abſolutely neceſſary to ex-

plain and illuſtrate ſeveral paſſages of holy ſcripture, whereby the propriety of their diction and language will not only be greatly beautified; but their evidences ſtrongly confirmed and enforced. And, GOD knows, the perverſeneſs of modern infidelity is ſo great, that the defenders of our faith are obliged to make uſe of all theſe foreign aids and aſſiſtances; nay, of our bleſſed SAVIOUR's inveterate enemies, the Jews and Pagans, as undeniable, tho' unwilling witneſſes for the authenticity of our holy Religion: for all the various manuſcripts of the ſacred ſcriptures collated in different parts of the world, the large citations from almoſt every page of them, which are to be found in the primitive fathers, and all ſucceeding chriſtian writers; and the concurrent teſtimony of all the GENERAL COUNCILS for the genuineneſs of them, are ſcarce ſufficient to convince the unreaſonable gainſayer, that the ſacred ſtreams of theſe divine fountains of knowledge are conveyed to us pure and unmixed, ſome immaterial miſtakes and errors of tranſcribers excepted.

FARTHER; it is of no ſmall conſequence to the cauſe of Religion to conſult the ancient and modern travels into, and hiſtories of, many parts of the heathen and chriſtian world, and the Jewiſh people for the providential completion of thoſe prophecies, that growing evidence of the truth of the ſcriptures, with reſpect to the fate of thoſe people, nations and kingdoms; which were, at the predictions

tions of their various future events, hid in the womb of time. The knowledge of the completion of which, by reading proper authors, muſt ſtill add more undeniable teſtimonies to, and be a ſtronger confirmation of, the truth and certainty of divine revelation. — And it may be proper to obſerve, that ſome emblematical actions of the prophets, by which their predictions were conveyed, tho' they have been much ridiculed by the profane, are yet, upon conſulting ancient cuſtoms, very rationally to be vindicated; as having a ſignificant uſe amongſt people accuſtomed to inſtruction by emblems, how odd ſoever they may appear now to us.

IT requires, moreover, the aids and aſſiſtances of natural philoſophy to diſtinguiſh in ſome, if not in many caſes, true and real miracles from the ancient Ægyptian magic arts; from the pious cheats of the Romiſh church, and from ſome operations of the ordinary courſe of nature. And as we owe to [1] one branch of this ſcience the undeniable proof of the univerſal deluge; "So we are indebted," as a learned writer obſerves, "to Newton's true

1 Had the adventitious foſſils not been found in every quarter of the globe, we could not conclude the deluge to have been univerſal: and had they not been found in all kinds of ſoils indifferently, we might ſuppoſe them to be (what they were once commonly thought) the natives of thoſe narrow beds in which they are diſcovered, and a kind of luſus naturæ. And from theſe two circumſtances conſidered together an inconteſtable proof of the truth of the Moſaic relation, I think, may be deduced. Bp. Warburton's prin. of nat. and rev. Religion, p. 202.

theory of the world, for the demonſtration of that intimate relation, which Moſes ſpeaks of, between the creator and his works; and who teaches, by his doctrine, as well as his example, the philoſophick world to believe and tremble."

ADD to all this, that the uſeful ſtudy of morals, and the many ingenious treatiſes wrote upon them by authors ancient and modern, will ſhew in their true light the pureſt precepts of the goſpel-morality. For as the defects and errors of the ancient moraliſts will clearly demonſtrate to us the neceſſity, ſuperior excellency and divinity of the chriſtian morals; ſo we can prove from the modern ſyſtems of ethicks, that their authors were greatly indebted to the rays of that fountain of moral light, the holy ſcriptures; which, tho' they had not the gratitude to own it, furniſhed them with a rich variety of the pureſt and ſublimeſt ſentiments moral and divine, tho' greatly diverſified and ſet off by them in a thouſand beautiful and ſtriking lights.

IN ſhort; the peculiar doctrines of chriſtianity, the great myſteries of it, are thoſe only, in which the exerciſe and extent of our reaſon and Learning can be called in queſtion. In this caſe, our improved reaſon is exerciſed in ſhewing not that theſe things muſt be, but that they may be true; and then the authority, by which they are publiſhed and eſtabliſhed, is ſufficient to prove, that they certainly are true. It is no prejudice to them,

that

that they are not diſcoverable by reaſon; neither were ſome of the articles of natural Religion, if we may judge by the general ignorance of them. — It is likewiſe no juſt objection againſt them, that we cannot fully comprehend them: for what finite being can comprehend infinity, or find out the Almighty to perfection? — When therefore GOD thought proper for our ſalvation to reveal himſelf under a diſtinction of perſons, when he hath opened to us the method of atonement by the meritorious ſufferings of his ſon, and has warned us not to neglect it under pain of eternal vengeance; all that reaſon has to do in theſe caſes is to ſhew, that theſe doctrines do not in their nature imply any contradiction; and that we are not, antecedently to inſtruction, competent judges of the equity of them; tho' much of it, yet not all, does now appear to us upon examination. And all this has been repeatedly ſhewn by the great and able defenders of revelation; who have vindicated our faith from all imaginary difficulties caſt on it by fraud and enmity; and ſhewn why real ones muſt in many caſes be expected; and proved, that notwithſtanding ſeveral of that nature; yet the whole ſyſtem is capable of being proved by external evidences, and is not unworthy of GOD to reveal and of man to accept. — And if we are able in this manner to vindicate the ways of GOD to man, why ſhould we decline to do it? why ſhould we leave unbelievers to triumph in their objections, which they

will

will not fail to repreſent as unanſwerable, if they continue in fact unanſwered?

But the time now obliges me to ſhew in a few words, how and in what manner Religion and Learning conduce to make us happy. — Happy is the man that findeth wiſdom, and the man that getteth underſtanding.

Now not to inſiſt on ſo common a topick as the diſtinguiſhing preeminence, which Learning gives us above the reſt of our fellow-creatures, as would fully appear, if we compared the ſcenes of cultivated life with the barbariſm of unlettered ſavages; we ſhall find, that it has no leſs influence in enlarging and refining the true and rational enjoyments of life, than in exalting and dignifying human nature. For knowledge is to the eye of the mind, what light is to the eye of the body: it cheers the ſoul and enlivens life; it brings in day and ſunſhine upon it; which will eaſe and diſſipate the gloomy and heavier intervals of ſpleen and ſolitude. It was the greateſt comfort, as well as the brighteſt ornament of the lives of the moſt eminent heathen philoſophers. Epicurus in Tully tells us, that the pleaſure of his writings, and the happineſs of his memory in muſing upon them, abated the ſharpneſs of his pains; they were a ſtrong ſupport to his old age, they kept off a great part of the weight of it, and made his years ſit eaſy upon him. For of all worldly pleaſure the progreſſive knowledge of human literature gives the mind the moſt rational and laſting ſatisfaction. It

opens

opens a wide and extenſive proſpect; it takes in paſt and future ages into it's view; and, by the help of revelation, even eternity itſelf. In ſuch a ſpacious and boundleſs field of knowledge, we may expatiate far and wide, whereever either buſy curioſity, innocent amuſement, or uſeful inſtruction directs; where we ſhall find ourſelves, as we travel along, grow much wiſer and better; every new ſcene filling us with admiration, and engaging us in a generous and freſh purſuit; where we ſhall find new rays of knowledge flowing in upon us from different arts and ſciences, and uniting their friendly beams to conduct us in our way. They will be a lantern to our feet and a light unto our paths. For the path of the ſcholar, as well as of the juſt, is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day of knowledge.

Besides; by a proper improvement of our rational faculties in all uſeful knowledge we ſhall learn to guard againſt the falſe reaſonings and ſubtile inſinuations of thoſe, whoſe intereſt it is to deceive. For Learning teaches us a juſt and clear way of judging, ballances the weight of arguments on both ſides, turns back the firſt offers and pleaſing conceits of the mind as ſuſpected; and tells us not to tread a ſtep without ſearching, as it were, and examining our ways. For men are always leſs credulous in proportion as they are more knowing. They bring every ſpecious appearance of things to the teſt of right reaſon; can view danger at a great diſtance,

diſtance, and always ward againſt it. — And by converſing with authors of a ſound and penetrating judgment, of a refined and poliſhed taſte, the ſoul will inſenſibly contract ſuch a ſuperiour way of judging and acting upon all occaſions, as will not only inſpire us with a prudent and becoming conduct ſo as to prevent us from wandering into any indecencies and irregularities of behaviour, and carry us far beyond the low ſphere of vice, and even the reach of every mean and vulgar amuſement; but will likewiſe induce us to tranſcribe all thoſe noble ſentiments and dictions of virtue into our lives and converſation; and to copy after thoſe beautiful deſcriptions of the refinements of manners, which give an agreeable poliſh to virtue and Learning, and which will make them appear lovely in the eyes of all beholders. — By ſuch a juſtneſs and elegance of thinking and acting we ſhall ſtamp a double value on the dignity of human nature; we ſhall, in a particular manner, adorn and beautify our own characters; and, by the help of religion, form ourſelves into the brightneſs of our great creator, and ſanctify both ourſelves and our actions to a happy eternity. I ſay, by the help of Religion; for education has not had her perfect work, and our happineſs is but half completed, without it. —This is that wiſdom, with reſpect of which all other accompliſhments are nothing worth; which whoſoever getteth, loveth his own ſoul; whoſoever keepeth, ſhall find good. —This is that

wiſdom,

wiſdom, which will give us that peace, which all the world beſides cannot give; that peace which paſſeth all underſtanding, even the peace of GOD: which neither depends upon the ſmiles of the great, nor the frowns of fortune; which will adminiſter true comfort to a man in the midſt of all outward calamities. For it is the nature and property of virtue and innocence to grow and flouriſh under oppreſſion; and a lively ſenſe of GOD's favour relieves men under the ſoreſt evils and diſtreſſes of this life. So that let the condition of the good chriſtian, who can give a reaſon of the hope that is in him, and whoſe faith is full of immortality, be what it will here, he muſt ſtill be cheerful in his ſpirits, becauſe innocent in his converſation. Nay, when old age itſelf, which is deſervedly reckoned one of the greateſt troubles and inconveniencies of life, ſhall make it's approaches to him, with all it's uſual attendants of aches and pains; yet even then the pleaſure of having done well, will be freſh and lively, will double upon reflection, and ſpeak peace to his departing ſoul.

IN ſhort; ſuch a pleaſure as this, is a foretaſte of heaven and an earneſt of eternity; ſuch as will be ſufficient to let in a ray of glory to cheer and comfort a man's heart, when all other comforts of this life ſhall fail and drop off; ſuch as will make his bed in his ſickneſs, and, when he is juſt leaving this world, and death ſhall have cloſed his eyes, will tranſport him to thoſe joys, which eye

hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. — Happy then, thrice happy is that man, that findeth wiſdom; and, withal, getteth underſtanding!

I ſhall now conclude with an inference from what has been ſaid.

SINCE then Religion and Learning conduce ſo much to the happineſs of human life, how gratefully ſenſible ought we to be, who have in theſe ſeminaries all the helps, opportunities and encouragements, that we can either want or wiſh for, of being wiſe and good, and conſequently happy.—Walk about this our Zion, go round about her, and tell the towers thereof; conſider her palaces; how elegant and beautiful they are; how ſequeſtered from the noiſe and hurry of the world; where arts and ſciences love to grow and flouriſh; and the ſtill voice of reaſon is heard and liſten'd to.—View thoſe grand and ſpacious repoſitories of Learning, where we may peruſe at large all the various productions of the wiſeſt men in all ages, and enrich ourſelves with all their ſurpriſing and uſeful labours.—Here are likewiſe different tempers and geniuſes happily mingled together, and all eager, or at leaſt ſhould be ſo, in the race of knowledge, to kindle a laudable and generous emulation in our breaſts: ſome of quick apprehenſion will ſoon light the torch and far out-run the reſt, 'till they cool by little and little, and at laſt grow weary. Such tender things are thoſe

exalted

exalted actions of the mind! But then the more ſlow, but more ſteady and judicious ſoon come up, and carry on the others ingenious conceptions by ſoberer degrees to a full accompliſhment. — Here we may imitate thoſe noctes atticæ, or the entertainments of the Deipnoſophiſts of old; wherein a man may be refreſhed in his mind and underſtanding no leſs than in his body: where each of us bring all the fruits we have plucked in the day time from the tree of knowledge, and conſult about the goodneſs of them, and how we may proceed to gather more to the beſt advantage; and where from the near alliance betwixt arts and ſciences, and the friendly commerce of Learning in general, we may communicate and receive mutual benefit. A happineſs peculiar to ſuch ſeats of education!—Here likewiſe we enjoy the true happineſs of living according to the rules and pleaſures of uncorrupted nature; and are under the agreeable neceſſity, by the kind diſcipline of the place, of at leaſt appearing good, if we are not really ſo; or elſe we ſhall be ſo loſt to all ſenſe of goodneſs as to be ſingular in wickedneſs: which is always ſo aſhamed to ſtand alone, that it wants numbers to keep it in any tolerable countenance.—And, laſtly, we are here bleſſed with the morning and evening ſacrifice to ſanctify all our ſtudies; and to beg a bleſſing upon our laudable and pious endeavours.—Since then we have the beſt means of edification, it is but in juſtice expected, that

we ſhould be the beſt men; that we ſhould bleſs GOD, who impreſſes on the minds of men good deſires and moves them to works of charity and munificence, for the pious liberality of our founders and benefactors; to whom we are indebted for all the above-mentioned happy advantages. And let us, as in gratitude bound, pay all decent regard to their names and memories; praiſe and imitate their virtues; live up to the rules of our inſtitution, and adorn our ſeveral profeſſions. — Let us make the intereſt of theſe nurſeries of education our own; eſpecially, ſince the credit of them does, in ſome meaſure, redound to ourſelves; as being of the number of thoſe, who were bred up under their culture and diſcipline; which have produced the ſeveral perſons, who at times by their excellencies in all religious and uſeful Learning have added luſtre to the univerſity and made it renowned among all nations. And if there is a pleaſing pride in recollecting, how many men famous in their generations for Religion and Learning, induſtry and morality, duty and loyalty, good order and diſcipline, and ever thing that is commendable, were educated in the ſame place with ourſelves; our annals can furniſh us with as great a variety of perſons, as any ſeminary of arts and ſciences can do, who were eminent in all great and good qualities, and remarkable for every thing that is praiſe-worthy. And if we think, that the luſtre of their virtues caſts ſome ſort of honour on us, let their

examples

examples be a farther inducement to us; and kindle a kind of noble and generous emulation in our breasts, that when we have finished our course with equal honour, we may, as a debt due to posterity, deliver down our lamp, as an additional light, to all succeeding ages.

And as for the younger part of my audience, let me advise them, not to think themselves too wise for instruction, or too manly for restraint. It is dangerous trusting to our own judgment at any age; especially at the most giddy time of life, when the passions run high, and reason is not strong enough to fence against them: when so many deceitful fancies, pleasing errors and false lights are hung out to entice their unwary steps out of the right way. Believe me, there is as little common prudence, as there is modesty, in despising the guidance of wiser and more experienced, discerning men than ourselves.—You may therefore very safely commit yourselves to the direction of those, who can have no other design than to watch over you for your own good. They do not pretend to impose upon, or usurp a dominion over you; but only to improve your reason, and to curb the irregular sallies of youthful lusts and passions. They only invite you to be wise and virtuous; intreat you to be happy in this life, and infinitely so in the next. A request most reasonable and friendly! You have all the liberty a good man would choose to enjoy; and all the advantages a learned man can wish for, in order

der to make all proper improvements in wiſdom and underſtanding. — You are therefore obliged in a double capacity, as ſcholars as well as men, to diſtinguiſh yourſelves by an exemplary behaviour, and to act ſuitably to the improved dignity of human nature. And as your notions of Religion are cultivated and rectified by good literature; and a liberal education hath raiſed you far above the common level in ſo many parts of uſeful knowledge; it is fit you ſhould riſe to a proportionable height in the practice of Religion, virtue and good manners: you ſhould make uſe of that riſing ground, as a perſon, I believe, expreſſes it, to look the nearer into heaven, not with a deſign to brave, but more fully to admire and adore the infinite perfection of Almighty GOD.

LET it be therefore your ſtudy and endeavour, as much as it is your duty and intereſt to make all ſuitable improvements under your preſent happy ſituation and advantages. That when you leave this place, and begin too late to reflect how inſignificant and ignorant you are; you may not then, as I know too many now do, blame the univerſity for the want of that diſcipline, of the great ſtrictneſs of which you now ſo much complain. Conſider that as theſe learned ſeminaries now ſuffer by your unſtatutable irregularities and extravagancies, ſo will your country afterwards by your ignorance, and yourſelves by a miſpent youth.

AND

AND as for thoſe, who have the advantages of birth and fortune, who are to be the makers and guardians of our laws and liberties, let them not juſt run through the forms and places of education without any real improvement; and then, for faſhion-ſake, travel, as they call it, at an unripen'd age; [1] when they have laid in no ſtock of knowledge to graft upon; when they are capable of making no other obſervations, than ſuch as tend to corrupt their manners, entice them from that ſtrictneſs of diſcipline, that ſeverity of moral virtue and integrity of Life, which were the glory of their anceſtors, and the admiration of foreign nations.

THERE is, indeed, a ſpace of time between that of youth being drawn from the ſhade of life, from the peaceable and ſolid amuſements of ſtudy, and that of their entering upon action and public buſineſs, which ſhould be employed in reading mankind. For practical knowledge built upon the ſolid foundations of good ſenſe and Learning muſt ever go into the compoſition of a great man's character. But

1 It is reported by an ingenious nobleman, who was well acquainted with the late grand duke of Tuſcany, a man of letters, a maſter of polite arts and ſciences, and a lover of the engliſh nation, that he frequently lamented the great ignorance of our young travellers, who ſeemed entirely unacquainted not only with the learning and learned men of our own country, but even with the government, laws, cuſtoms and manners of it, nay, ſometimes whether England was an iſland or not. Such travellers may, perhaps, gather ſtrength of body, if ſickly and virtuous, but not the proper improvement of mind.

then

then this is the laſt thing to be done in education; when the mind is enriched with all uſeful Learning, and a man is thoroughly acquainted with the laws and manners of his own country, then travelling into other nations will give him an opportunity of increaſing his knowledge and opening his mind with that generous enlargement, which men of ſenſe and judgment will unavoidably do from variety of objects and diverſity of converſation. This is that beautiful, finiſhing poliſh, which is done by converſing with the ſenſible, polite world; which will make Learning ſit gracefully upon a man without any forbidding, moroſe, or pedantic appearances; and which will ſtamp an additional value upon what he does or ſays by a peculiar grace, a manner, a decorum. — But it's only loſt labour to rub the native ruſt from, and give an outward poliſh to, any ordinary and common metal, that bears no image and ſuperſcription, but to ſhew the badneſs of the compoſition, and that it will not paſs current.

In ſhort; if you have the honeſt and laudable ambition of ſtanding foremoſt in the rank of all great and good men, when you are called into publick life after the thoughtleſs, giddy, frothy ſprightlineſs of youth ſubſides; let me adviſe you to lay a good foundation here of all religious and uſeful knowledge againſt the time to come: that after you have made the proper improvements in all moral and intellectual endowments; when you are confirmed

confirmed in all wiſdom and goodneſs; and arrived at the full ſtature of your underſtandings, and are in perfect favour with GOD and man; you may with as much honour, as ſafety, ſtep forth into action, — fill your characters, — adorn your ſeveral ſtations and employments to the beſt advantage, — reflect back a luſtre on the place of your education, and after a life made happy here by Religion, Learning and every thing commendable, be ſo for ever, in the world to come.

FINIS.

26 SE60